



Weight! Do Your Homework Before You Sign That Gym Contract

Release Date: January 14, 2016

Media Contact: Jerad Albracht, 608-224-5007
Bill Cosh, Communications Director, 608-224-5020

MADISON – Still holding to a resolution to improve your health in 2016? If so, you may be in the market for a fitness or weight reduction center membership. But before signing a new contract or making a down payment, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) suggests that consumers do their homework to make certain that the option they choose is the safest bet for their money.

“Many gyms and weight reduction centers will offer promotions to bring new members through the doors, and these offers typically have strict enrollment deadlines,” said Frank Frassetto, Division Administrator for Trade and Consumer Protection. “Tour a number of facilities before you settle on a specific center and don’t be swayed by high-pressure sales pitches.”

If you intend to join a center, make sure to get the membership information in writing and keep it in your files. If an issue arises over the terms of the membership, this paperwork will be your proof of the original agreement.

Wisconsin consumers are protected by state laws regulating both fitness and weight reduction centers:

- **Fitness Centers**
 - All memberships must have an expiration date, and memberships cannot be sold for a period greater than two years.
 - If a center collects more than \$100 in advance of providing services, it is required to have a \$25,000 form of financial responsibility filed with the state or proof of funds held in an escrow account.
 - Fitness center contracts must include a three-day cancellation right. Consumers regretting a membership purchase must put their cancellation request in writing.
- **Weight Reduction Centers**
 - Memberships cannot exceed two years unless the contract includes a weight maintenance program. In this case, the contract can be extended to a period not to exceed three years.
 - The full price of the membership must be disclosed, including any interest or other charges.
 - Weight reduction centers requiring members to pay more than \$100 in advance fees are required to establish proof of financial responsibility with the state.
 - New members must be informed of their three-day right to cancel.

For additional information or to file a complaint, visit the Consumer Protection Bureau at datcp.wisconsin.gov, call the Consumer Information Hotline at 800-422-7128 or send an e-mail to datcp hotline@wisconsin.gov.

Connect with us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/wiconsumer.

###